

Arlington Town Meeting — Motion to Amend

ARTICLE NO. 17

Dated: May 1, 2024

I, Susan R. Doctrow, do hereby submit the following Motion to Amend Article 17

To amend the substitute motion (revised April 25, 2024) by Paul Schlichtman by adding a fifth paragraph at the end of Section 1: Findings and Purposes, that reads as follows:

The Housing Corporation of Arlington has demonstrated that property owners can create reasonable rules relating to the quiet enjoyment of other tenants such as noise, sanitation, and safety, while permitting companion animals in their housing units. It is the goal of this bylaw to replace blanket pet bans with similar policies that recognize the benefits of responsible pet ownership, while respecting the needs of neighbors and property owners.

Comment:

The effect of this amendment is that the Section 1 reads as follows, when applied to the Substitute Motion offered by Paul Schlichtman:

Section 1: Findings and Purposes

Throughout history, art and literature have depicted humans of all walks of life and social strata with companion animals, illustrating their widespread inclusion and importance to society. This is true in virtually every culture and across continents.

Our own society abounds with examples of the well-established place animals have in our hearts and homes, and people of all ages enjoy and benefit from animal companionship. For some people, particularly senior citizens, companion animals offer a welcome relief from loneliness. For children, an animal in the home contributes warmth and unconditional love, and teaches altruistic consideration for the welfare of others. Those who suffer from disease or injury experience a therapeutic, even emotional, benefit from their presence.

At the close of 2023, 70,000 additional cats and 107,000 additional dogs were in the animal sheltering system as compared to the end of 2022, according to the national database of Shelter Animals Count. Therefore, pro-pet policies can save lives by reducing the killing of shelter animals, increase the potential for adoption, and lessen the high costs of sheltering and feeding homeless animals by overwhelmed municipal and volunteer rescue centers. This reduces the burden placed on both taxpayers and charitable donors. Other benefits include enhanced civic engagement and improved public health.

As fears about companion animals causing damage are exaggerated and can be mitigated by less restrictive measures, including but not limited to reasonable security deposits, and subject to review by the Massachusetts Attorney General, blanket pet bans should no longer be permissible.

The Housing Corporation of Arlington has demonstrated that property owners can create reasonable rules relating to the quiet enjoyment of other tenants such as noise, sanitation, and safety, while permitting companion animals in their housing units. It is the goal of this bylaw to replace blanket pet bans with similar policies that recognize the benefits of responsible pet ownership, while respecting the needs of neighbors and property owners.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan R. Doctrow, Precinct 21

Date Voted: _____

Action Taken: _____